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Archiepiscopal Encyclical for National Philoptochos Sunday

November 1, 2026

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Presvyteres and Diakonisses, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

Whoever is merciful to the poor lends unto God.
(Proverbs 19:17)

Beloved Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Our Philoptochos Sisterhoods, which are mirrors of community within every Parish, are wondrous vehicles of spiritual exchange. By showing mercy, compassion, and active philanthropy to those less fortunate among us, they create a miraculous imbalance with God. For as the Proverb says, "Whoever is merciful to the poor lends unto God."

Imagine that! We are lending to God. God has allowed Himself to be indebted to us. This seems to turn everything about the relationship between Creator and creation upside down. And yet, through His ineffable condescension toward us – out of pure love and nothing else – God allows Himself to become a debtor to us. This is a ministry beyond comprehension even to the Angels, for they long to look into things revealed and

announced to us in the Gospel by the Holy Spirit, Who is sent from Heaven Itself (cf. 1 Peter 1:12).

Therefore, on this National Philoptochos Sunday, let us remember their Heavenly Patrons, the Holy Anargyroi Cosmas and Damian, who gave of themselves to the uttermost and showed us how to lend unto God. By supporting Philoptochos ministries, all of us can participate in this miraculous exchange with the Almighty. By doing good in the here and now – led by our Philoptochos Sisters – we reserve for ourselves treasures in Heaven, where God keeps rewards for those who love Him and those who love each other.

With paternal love in our Lord Jesus Christ,



†ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America